

the gull

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California's Nesters and Their Habitats

The topic of our March general membership meeting will be the breeding birds of California. Within its borders, California has more unique types of wildlife habitat than any of the other forty-nine states. These diverse habitats support a great variety of birds. Join us as we explore some of the areas used by our native nesters and delve into some fascinating aspects of bird biology and behavior.

Featured speaker will be Bob Stewart, a research biologist and naturalist at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory for more than ten years. His talk and slide presentation will focus on male and female roles in the breeding cycle. The magnificent slides of Ian Tate, Northern California's outstanding bird photographer, will illustrate Bob's talk.

The meeting, Thursday, March 12, at 7:30 p.m., will be in the Golden Gate Room of the TraveLodge at the Wharf, 250 Beach St., San Francisco (near Pier 39). Free parking is available in the upper TraveLodge parking lot. Take the elevator down to the first level; the meeting room is off the courtyard and swimming pool.

Bring family and friends.

—PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Field Trips Calendar

See the February *Gull* for details on the following trip:

Saturday, March 7—San Francisco Bird Blitz. *Please note a new phone number for Donna Lion and Alan Hopkins (585-5669).*

Wednesday, March 11—Mini trip to **Garin Ranch Regional Park**. Meet at the Ashby Ave. entrance to the Claremont Hotel parking lot at **8:30 a.m.** to carpool. Take the Warren Fwy. (keep south past the Hayward and Stockton sign) onto Foothill Blvd. to 27500 Mission, then left on Calhoun to the parking lot. Rain cancels the trip. Luncheon optional. Leaders: Ruth Voss (525-8032) and Delpha de Timofeev.

Saturday, March 14—**Lake Merced, San Francisco**. Meet at **8:30 a.m.** at the south end of Sunset Blvd. in the Lake Merced Circle. This is a good time to see wintering grebes and ducks and a few spring migrants. If you take the #72 bus be sure to get off at Ocean Ave. because the next stop is Winston Dr., about one-half mile away. Lunch is optional for this half-day trip. Leader: Naomi Svenningsen (584-6233). (✓)

Sunday, March 15—A two-mile walk to **Tennessee Cove**, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, to look for land and shorebirds, including White-throated Swifts. From San Francisco, take Hwy. 1 exit off Hwy. 101 toward the Mill Valley and Stinson Beach exit. In about one-quarter mile turn left into Tennessee Valley Rd. Meet at the end of the road at **9 a.m.** Bring lunch. Leader: Betty Short (921-3020) work.

Saturday, March 21—**Alameda and San Leandro Shoreline**. Meet at **9 a.m.** in Alameda, at Broadway and Shoreline Dr. We will bird the Elsie B. Roemer Bird Sanctuary and the San Leandro Bay Regional Shoreline. Toward the end of the day we will look for Burrowing Owls on Bay Farm Island. Be sure to bring lunch and liquids. We should see migrating shorebirds, many in breeding plumage. Waterfowl should also be present in good numbers, so bring your scope. Leader: Leora Feeney (522-8525). (✓)

Sunday, March 22—**Coyote Hills Regional Park and San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (SFBNWR)**. Meet at **9:30 a.m.** at the visitors' center. From Hwy. 17 or Hwy. 84 exit at Jarvis Ave. and follow the signs to the park. During the morning we will bird at Coyote Hills. After lunch we will caravan to the SFBNWR to see the new exhibits at the visitors' center and look at birds in the adjoining area. Bring lunch, liquids and a scope if you have one. In case of rain please contact the leader: Paul Covell (530-2513). (✓)

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Sunday, March 29—Sunol Regional Park. Meet at 8 a.m. at the park entrance. Take I-680 south, turn off at Calaveras Rd., go left and follow the signs to Sunol Park, about five miles. Bring lunch and liquids. (Park regulations prohibit alcoholic beverages.) We should see Golden Eagles, a variety of winter residents and early spring migrants. Leader: Peter Allen (981-7199). (✓)

Saturday, April 4—Redwood Regional Park, Oakland. This trip should be especially good for beginning birders. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the intersection of Redwood Rd. and Skyline Blvd. by the gas station. We will caravan from there to the Skyline entrance at the northwest end of the park. We could see a wide variety of wintering birds, permanent residents and a few spring migrants. Bring your lunch for a picnic afterward. Leaders: Shirley and Michael Kelly (387-8290). (✓)

BEGINNERS' FIELD TRIP—Designed especially for beginning birders, this field trip will concentrate on the identification of the most common birds. The area covered during the day will include Five Brooks pond, Bolinas Lagoon and Audubon Canyon Ranch. On **Sunday, April 5**, meet at 9 a.m. at the Five Brooks parking lot (about five miles south of Olema on Hwy. 1). We will look for early spring migrants near the pond, then caravan to Audubon Canyon Ranch with stops along Bolinas Lagoon. Bring your lunch and we will picnic at the Ranch (\$1 contribution).

After lunch we'll walk up to the overlook to see the nesting herons and egrets. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. Leader: Gloria Markowitz (892-2910). (✓)

July 13-19—Tuolumne River Area. Make reservations now at Tuolumne Meadows High Sierra Camp by calling (209) 372-4611, ext. 211. More details in a future *Gull*.

Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). Call Kate Partridge at 642-1733 (Richmond) and leave a message. She will contact you.

Problems: If for any reason you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader or need information regarding a trip, call Dan Murphy (564-0074) or the GGAS office (843-2222).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

Late December and January Observations

—through January 26

SHEARWATER TO RAIL

Three Manx Shearwaters were seen in Monterey Bay Dec. 14 (mob) and two were off Bodega Head Dec. 28 (*fide* BDP). The high count of 17 Cattle Egrets was achieved three times: on the Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Dec. 21 (JM), Bixler Rd. Jan. 16 (BR) and Cypress Rd. Jan. 24 (DJ). The two latter locations are both in eastern Contra Costa County and could represent the same flock. A Least Bittern in Olema Marsh Dec. 20 (RS) was a real CBC prize. Birders spotted a **Bewik's Swan** along Woodbridge Rd., San Joaquin County, Jan. 17 (TL, DAS) and Jan. 25 (RJ, RD, *et al.*). Although a coastal bird farther north, at our latitude the Aleutian Canada Goose is normally in the Central Valley, but one was at Rodeo Lagoon Dec. 31 (MS). A Ross' Goose at Sea Ranch Jan. 2 (BJ, DL, LL) also should have been in the Central Valley. The Tufted Duck at Muddy Hollow was last reported Dec. 27 (FP), but the one at Mill Valley stayed at least through Jan. 23 (BBi). Other rare ducks were in expected locations, except for two Oldsquaws far inside San Francisco Bay: at the mouth of Redwood Creek Dec. 16 (GJ) and north of Dumbarton Bridge Dec. 22 (JMS, AHc). Up to 30 or more Hooded Mergansers in January on Marina Lagoon, Foster City, (TC, NB, *et al.*) was a large flock for around the Bay. A Red-tailed Hawk five miles west of Santa Rosa Dec. 21-22 showed marks of "Harlan's" despite having red in the tail (JM, LCB, *et al.*). In addition to the usual Black Rail locations, five were seen Dec. 27 on the Contra Costa CBC, at Mallard Island (*fide* BR).

CHARADRIIFORMES

At least 14 Mountain Plovers inhabited the Clifton Court Forebay site from Nov. 6 to Jan. 25 (BR, RJ, RD). An American Golden Plover wintering on Southeast Farallon Island (PRBO) is the first known to do so. A Rock Sandpiper is also wintering there (PRBO), as are those at Bodega Head and Princeton Harbor (mob). Two Ruffs were each observed on only one day, Limantour Dec. 25 (NC) and Los Banos Dec. 30 (DH, RH).

A white Glaucous Gull at the Martinez Dump Dec. 27 and Jan. 3 was thought to be a second winter individual (BR, JML) and a gull there Jan. 25 was believed to be an adult Glaucous Gull (EHs). California reports of Glaucous Gulls older than first winter need to be very thorough and precise in order to be convincing, as nearly all Glaucous

Gulls this far south are in their first year and even these are rare. Even most "pure white Glaucous Gulls" usually prove on close inspection to have marks of first winter plumage or to be another species. Older individuals must be distinguished with great caution from the abundant Glaucous-winged Gull, which may be very pale and/or bleached by wear. At the Stockton Sewage Ponds, the **Black-headed Gull** was reported only on Jan. 24 (DY), but the **Little Gull** was seen several times through the same date (EH, CD, BR, BBi). In Monterey Bay, a **Craveri's Murrelet** was reported Jan. 3 and a Tufted Puffin was there the same day (both TC, *et al.*).

HUMMER AND TEN-PRIMARIED PASSERINES

An early male Allen's Hummingbird was back in Alamo Jan. 12 (JR). At the other extreme, a **Western Kingbird** lingered until the Putah Creek CBC Dec. 21 (EH, RM, *et al.*) The **Olivaceous Flycatcher** wintering in Santa Cruz was still evident Jan. 24 (JL). Of the two Eastern Phoebes recorded on the Monterey CBC Dec. 30, one in Pacific Grove was seen only that day (*fide* DR) but another found earlier in El Encinal Cemetery, Monterey, remained at least to Jan. 25 (mob, BB).

The **Common Skylark** was seen at Hall Ranch through Jan. 13 (AM, BP, JR, *et al.*). Two or more Barn Swallows at Creamery Bay, Point Reyes, Dec. 20 (DB) were very late. A Sage Thrasher vacationed at the Salinas Country Club from late November to at least Dec. 29 (DR, *et al.*), while another near Sacramento Airport Dec. 28 (EG) was perhaps contemplating a flight. Black Diamond Mines Regional Park seems to be popular with Townsend's Solitaires; another was seen there Dec. 27 (KF, EHs). An immature Northern Shrike at Home Bay, Point Reyes, Dec. 17 was thought to be the same individual seen at Limantour six weeks earlier (DS). Another Northern Shrike was at Folsom Lake Dec. 30 (JML). A Solitary Vireo accompanied the various warblers and orioles lingering in Pacific Grove Dec. 30 (*fide* DR) and was still there Jan. 3 (DD).

NINE-PRIMARIED PASSERINES

For brevity I will summarize these birds largely by location, not in strict taxonomic order. Once again a Black-and-white Warbler was in Tilden Park on the Oakland CBC day, Dec. 21 (EM). The Point Reyes CBC was similarly favored, with a Black-and-white by the base of Limantour Rd. Dec. 20 (RS?). Of course, the Monterey CBC Dec. 30 dwarfed these finds with a Black-and-white Warbler and adult male American Redstart at the Carmel River Mouth (DR), another Black-and-white Warbler, a **Lucy's Warbler**, two Tennessee Warblers, three Nashville Warblers and four Northern Orioles all in Pacific Grove (*fide*

DR), plus the phoebes and vireo mentioned above. On Jan. 3 the Black-and-white Warbler was still in Pacific Grove and two Palm Warblers were also there (DD). Two Nashville Warblers and two Northern Orioles (one "Baltimore") were still evident Jan. 10 (JR, BR). Santa Cruz contributed a Nashville Warbler and a Palm Warbler at Neary's Lagoon Dec. 21 (BRe) and one Western Tanager was still near the Olivaceous Flycatcher Jan. 24 (JL). Two more Western Tanagers were at Fort Mason, San Francisco, Dec. 19 (KI) and a Tennessee Warbler was near Pioneer Log Cabin, Golden Gate Park, Jan. 23 (BA). A Northern Waterthrush near Mountain Lake, San Francisco, Dec. 21 and Jan. 4, 16-18 (NB) represents a very unusual wintering individual. Winter waterthrushes should be examined very closely because the Louisiana Waterthrush (amazingly only one California record, 72 years old) winters in western Mexico. A Palm Warbler was at the Ukiah Sewage Ponds Dec. 31 (DE) and a Northern Oriole was at Duncan's Mill, Sonoma County, Dec. 27 (DEI). A Palm Warbler banded on Southeast Farallon Dec. 22 is spending the winter (PRBO). A Summer Tanager was found Jan. 6 in Pacific Grove (DR), where the species often occurs in winter.

Three Red Crossbills at Metson Lake, Golden Gate Park, Jan. 17 (BR) were the only ones reported. Notable Central Valley sparrows were the Black-throated along West Butte Rd., Sutter County, Dec. 22 (WA, JL) and the Harris' at Sacramento Dec. 15-30 (RMCC). A good total of ten Swamp Sparrows was found on the Dec. 20 Point Reyes CBC, mostly in the Olema Marsh area (RS, *et al.*). Other CBCs had single Swamp Sparrows: at Bodega Bay Dec. 28 (*fide* BDP), Santa Cruz Dec. 21 (*fide* BB) and at Laguna Grande near Monterey Dec. 27-30 (BRe). At Hall Ranch, 14 Lapland Longspurs were counted Dec. 20 and at least 12 remained Jan. 13 (AM, BP, JR, *et al.*).

Erratum: In the November Observations (January *Gull* p. 5), the first two Mountain Plovers at Clifton Court Forebay were found by Bob Richmond.

Observers: Beverly Anderson, Therese Anderson, Walt Anderson, Bruce Barrett (BB), Dennis Beall, Bix Bimory (BBi), Laurence C. Binford, Neil Blank, Ted Chandik, Bill Chilson, Nancy Conzett, Richard Davis, Carol Deuel, Donna Dittmann, Vickie Dziadosz, Bruce Elliott, Doug Ellis (DEI), Dick Erickson (DE), Kent Fickett, Ed Greaves, Rob Hanson, Ed Harper (EH), Ed Hase (EHs), Kevin Hintsa, Alice Hoch (AHc), Alan Hopkins (AH), David Houle, George Hugenberg, Ken Irwin, Richard Jeffers, Bob Johnsen (BJ), Dick Johnson, Bill Jones, Greg Juisti, Jeri M. Langham, Robert Laws, David Littlejohn, Lisa Littlejohn,

Tom Love, John Luther, Eugene Makishima, Ralph McCormack, Mary McLaughlin, Alice Mericourt, many observers (mob), Jerry Muegle, Robert Munn, Bill Noble, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Fredric Petersen, Bill Pursell, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon report thanks to Bryant Bainbridge), Bill Reese (BRe), Bob Richmond (BR), Jean Richmond, Don Roberson, Patricia Sagen, Madge Seaver, Dave Shuford, Rich Sinchek, Davis Audubon Society, Jean-Marie Spoelman, Rich Stallcup (RS), Ann Stone, David Yee.

—STEPHEN F. BAILEY, *Observations Editor*
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(phone 548-9507; or Karen L. Bailey at 642-3327 8 a.m.-noon, 1-5 p.m.)

Conservation Notes

In the closing days of his administration, President Carter declared the Point Reyes/Farallon Islands area a National Marine Sanctuary. The sanctuary covers one thousand square miles of ocean waters. Its boundaries circle the Farallones and then extend north to Point Reyes, Tomales Bay and Bodega Bay. It includes the Bolinas Lagoon. The order forbids oil and gas development and exploration within the sanctuary.

(*Editor's note:* As *The Gull* went to press, Secretary of the Interior James Watt announced that at President Reagan's request he will be reopening discussion of this controversial issue.)

Outgoing Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus designated 1,235 miles of northern California rivers as part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Those affected are the Klamath, Trinity, Smith and Eel rivers and the lower American River near Sacramento. Andrus' designation followed a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals in San Francisco overturning decisions which had blocked such an action. The rivers so designated are the last free flowing rivers in the state.

On February 2 a suit was filed in the San Francisco Court of Appeals to overturn the Secretary's action. The suit was filed by four timber growing counties: Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity and Siskiyou, joined as plaintiffs by the Del Norte Unified School District, a group of timber and lumber companies and the California Forest Protection Association. The suit contends that the wilderness designation was flawed.

On October 15, 1980, President Carter signed an executive order which required that federal agencies obtain approval from the Lake Tahoe Federal Coordinating Council before taking actions which would affect the Tahoe Basin. The purpose of the order was to maintain air, water and

land resources standards in the area. On January 17, 1981, aides to Senator Paul Laxalt reported that President Reagan's advisors are giving serious consideration to revoking the order. Laxalt is also pressing for amendments to the Burton-Santini bill that gave the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency authority over land acquisitions at the Lake.

—ANNE BAECK, for the Legislative Subcommittee

No More Endangered Species?

The Department of Interior would like us to think so. The Department plans to institute major changes within the Endangered Species Program. In a directive dated mid-January, the Office of Endangered Species has been told to reduce by 50 percent the number of animals and plants it should examine for listing. The new emphasis will be toward the recovery of presently endangered species.

This dangerous move, fostered in the same growth-oriented atmosphere that informs us that our resource and pollution problems are not awfully serious, will have the effect of directing attention away from the task of saving the endangered species that we will be losing *daily* by the year 2000.

To express your concern with this change in policy, write to Secretary James Watt, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. For further information, contact the GGAS office at 843-2222.

Watt Is Confirmed After Rancorous Debate

By a vote of 83-12, the Senate confirmed James G. Watt as President Reagan's Secretary of the Interior. The opposition — both in the number of nay votes and the strong language used by senators who fought the appointment — was far greater than it had been in any of the other Reagan nominations. And some of the senators who voted approval said, in effect, that they had done so with their fingers crossed.

For the past three years, Watt has been president of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, an organization supported in large part by major oil, mining, grazing and timber concerns. In that post and earlier with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Watt has fought regulations designed to protect the environment and has urged greater development of public lands. Senator Dale Bumpers of Arkansas, one of Watt's most outspoken critics, called him a "developer at any price" and said that there is "at least a very grave appearance of conflict of interest." Howard M. Metzenbaum of Ohio declared that confirming Watt would bring "a massive shift away from conserving our natural resources."

—excerpted from *Audubon Leader*




Save Mono Lake


Catalog Sale

Do you want to treat yourself to something special and at the same time benefit Mono Lake? The Golden Gate Audubon Society is offering some wonderful items for sale with proceeds to go for the protection of Mono Lake. All items have been donated, and all items are special; there is only one of each. This is the first list of items, dated March 1, 1981; there will be two more lists, all different, dated April 1 and May 1. If you wish to see an item before purchasing, it may be viewed in the Golden Gate Audubon Society office, 2718 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, during the regular business hours, 9-12 a.m. and 1-4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. To reserve an item, call the GGAS office, 843-2222, during regular business hours, or 524-1506 evenings and weekends. Reservations will be held only 5 days without payment. Calls accepted beginning Monday, March 16. Do not delay--there is only one of each item!

1. Skis, cross country, Toppen 200 mm, hardwood, with Troll bindings, medium, and Haugen bamboo poles, 4'8" (all new), retail \$100; donated by Jim Crooks. \$60.00
2. Ski boots, cross country, black leather, Riebers of Norway, men's size 8 (new), retail \$60; donated by Jim Crooks. 40.00
3. Book, The Big Oak Flat Road to Yosemite by Irene D. Paden and Margaret E. Shlichtmann, published by The Holmes Book Company, Oakland, 1975; cloth-bound, 356 pages, with 36 black and white photographs; a fascinating account of freighting from Stockton to Yosemite Valley; retail \$8.95, donated by the California Room, Holmes Book Company, Oakland. 7.50
4. Book, High and Wild, A Mountaineer's World by Galen Rowell, published by Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1979; Clothbound, 160 pages; color photographs by the author include Yosemite and eastern Sierras; retail \$30. Auto-graphed and donated by the author. Rowell is a Berkeley resident, mountaineer, and freelance photojournalist; he is author of 4 books and a contributor to Audubon, National Geographic, National Wildlife, Sports Illustrated. 25.00
5. Hand mirror, sculpted from Hawaiian koa with the touch of well-finished wood; retail \$28; donated by Dean Santner Woodworking of Emeryville. Santner is a well-known wood sculptor and designer; his upcoming exhibit in Honolulu features a modular wall system of furniture. He has been a contributor to Fine Woodworking and a lecturer at University of California Extension. 23.00



6. Silk screen print, "California Condor," 19/20, by Alan Hopkins; image size 9"w x 22"h, on 100% cotton rag paper; the magnificent condor soars above softly shaded mountains; donated by the artist. Hopkins is a Bay Area native with a BFA in painting from the San Francisco Art Institute. His work has been exhibited throughout California. He has led field trips for Golden Gate Audubon, and the "California Condor" was inspired on trips to Mt. Piños with GGAS. \$40.00
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7. Book, Homage to Jack Spicer and Other Poems by Thomas Parkinson, published by Ark Press, Berkeley, 1970; No. 22 of 50 numbered and signed copies of a limited edition of 750; a collection of 22 poems of 1965-1969; paperback, cover design by Ariel; retail \$15; donated by the author. Parkinson is the author of 8 books of verse; he also is recognized for his critical books on W. B. Yeats. He is Professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley. 12.00
8. Book, People are for the Birds by Paul Covell, published by Western Interpretive Press, Oakland, 1978; accounts of city dwellers and wild life, birders and bird rescuers; retail \$7.50; autographed and donated by the author. 6.50
9. Portfolio print of Guy C. Coheleach's "Red-Shafted Flicker," 14" x 18½", 1973, unframed, plate #2 of Backyard Bird Series, signed by the artist. Coheleach is a well-known wildlife artist whose work has appeared often in Audubon magazine. Retail \$90; donated by GGAS. 75.00

10. Stoneware vase, mottled brown wood-ash glaze, height 10"; truly handsome, for use or display; by Cathy Creighton; gallery price \$40; donated by the potter. Cathy is a well-known Bay Area potter who has exhibited her work in Walnut Creek, Oakland, Mendocino, San Juan Bautista; her work is permanently shown at Contemporary Arts in Berkeley. She received a Merit Award at the Bay Area Women's Craft Exhibit in 1977 at the Berkeley Art Center. 
11. Elegant Dinner of your choice for 2 at Narsai's. Complete dinner, including soup, appetizer, entree, salad, dessert, and coffee or tea, excluding tax and gratuity; value to \$60; donated by Narsai's in Kensington. 45.00
12. Photogravure, "Farallones Islands" by artist Julian Rix, portfolio print, unframed, 12" x 16", from "Picturesque California," John Muir edition, 1888, J. Dewing Publishing Co., New York and San Francisco; a rare bit of Californiana; retail \$15; donated by Afton E. Crooks. 10.00
13. Polarguard Sleeping Bag, mummy style, rated to +5° F, 4 lbs, synthetic fill, ripstop nylon shell, just the sleeping bag for wet weather, large (for those up to 6'4") or regular (for those up to 5'10"), with carrying bag; retail \$112; donated by North Face, Berkeley, and includes North Face guaranty against defects, workmanship or material. 90.00

* Sales tax to be added.

Farallon Island Trips

Golden Gate Audubon Society will sponsor boat trips to circle the Farallon Islands on Sunday, May 3 and May 10. We will have an opportunity to view nesting and migrating seabirds, many of which are sighted only occasionally from the mainland. Past trips have produced sightings of Tufted Puffins, shearwaters, albatross and several species of marine mammals.

Reservations can be made by sending \$19 per person with a self-addressed stamped envelope to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705. Checks should be made payable to the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Space for the trips is limited and will be filled on a first come, first served basis. We plan an early morning departure from Emeryville marina.

1981 Texas Birding Trip

There is still room on the GGAS-sponsored trip to Texas this spring. The trip is a repeat of the 1978 trip which recorded more than 280 bird species. There will be an optional trip to Big Bend National Park to look for the Colima Warbler and other west Texas birds. The dates are April 18-30, with an extension to May 3. For reservations and information call Mike Wihler at 664-6567 during the day.

Panama Tour a Success

With 448 species of birds recorded for the trip, Chris Carpenter and Joe Morlan report that their GGAS-sponsored tour to Panama last January was a resounding success. Good food, accommodations and transportation made it a delightful two weeks for the 17 participants. In addition to the birds, members of the tour saw the Canal in operation and encountered many mammals along the way, such as Three-toed Sloth, Capuchin and Howler Monkeys, Rufous-naped Marmoset, Aguti and a family of Coatiundi on Pipeline Rd. On top of all this the weather was superb.

Highlights among the birds seen included the sighting of 29 species of hummingbirds, 54 species of flycatchers, 22 species of tanagers and 12 species of wren.

The best evening was spent on Escobal Rd. with Dr. Jaime Pujals, Panama's leading field ornithologist, who showed us Pauraque, Common Potoo (six feet away), Tropical Screech Owl, Black-and-white Owl and the incredible Great Potoo. The trip ended in the western highlands on a high note with the sighting of a calling Three-wattled Bellbird.

Chris and Joe hope to take another group to Panama next year and will provide more information in a future *Gull*.

Backyard Birders' Question Box

Last summer, while working in my garden, a loud cawing made me look up. A raven was flying overhead followed by about a dozen small birds. Why?

This type of avian behavior is called "mobbing" and probably occurs far more often, even in urban areas, than it is observed. Since the time of the ancient Greeks, mobbing of birds by other birds has been recorded from around the world both in fables and in factual reporting.

At the appearance of a predator, birds utter warning calls that are heeded by their own species and often by members of other species. Usually the alerted birds take cover to avoid the danger, but sometimes they will band together to "mob" or harass a common enemy, a hawk, owl, gull, raven, snake, cat, even a human. The attack may be triggered by a predatory bird just flying over another bird's territory. Sometimes there seems to be no apparent reason except that one bird becomes alarmed, gives the danger call and others gather.

Recent research seems to indicate that birds can recognize from the attitude or posture of a predator that it is hungry and this may set off a mobbing. During the breeding season, parent birds of the same or closely allied species will attack an enemy together to distract its attention, drive it off and keep it from finding the young in the vicinity.

Usually a bird predator will simply fly away pursued by a small crowd of complainants. Hawks, especially the Red-tailed Hawk, spiral higher than the small birds care to go. After a short time, the mob breaks up and disperses. There is seldom any direct attack by the mobbers although there are records of predators being killed. For example, Arctic Terns have been reported to have driven an egg-eating crow to its death in the water.

Owls that roost during the day may be harassed by other birds, especially crows whose enmity for owls is legendary. Harassing is done by a large group of birds sitting in trees or bushes near the owl. The attackers create a great clamor and take turns rushing at the roosting bird. Observing such behavior might be of help to a bird watcher in locating an owl.

Owls, hawks, gulls and ravens do not usually enter urban backyards, so the beginning of a mobbing probably would take place in an open area such as a park, a lakeside or a beach. Joggers, walkers and picnickers are more likely to observe such an event than the rest of us who may occasionally catch a glimpse overhead of a gull pursued by blackbirds, a hawk by sparrows or a raven by assorted small birds.

If you would like to share information on bird behavior that you have observed or if you have a question about the birds that are commonly found in our area, write to Kay Steinberg, 845-38th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94121.

March Cooper Society Meeting

Dr. F. Lynn Carpenter of the University of California, Irvine, will discuss territory size in migrating Rufous Hummingbirds at the March 2 meeting of the Cooper Society. A business meeting at 7:30 p.m. precedes the 8 p.m. lecture in Room 2503 of the Life Sciences Bldg. on the UC campus.

Celebrate Arbor Day

Rain or shine, there will be a tree planting workshop at Speedway Meadow in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park on Saturday, March 7, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Previous workshops have been very successful thanks to the many volunteers (including GGAS membes) who turned out to help in this part of the Park's reforestation project. Bring a picnic lunch and plan to make a day of it. If you want more information on the reforestation project or the upcoming workshop, contact the Reforestation Office at 558-3182.

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

. . . I will say that I loved Brian McCaffery's articles — they were absolutely beautiful and I miss them. I don't see any reason why they can't be in *The Gull* just as well as *Audubon*.

Personally, I find the endless lists of observations boring as hell because I'm not a lister. However, if that got around, I might be ostracized!

Re the condors — (Editor's note: my reference to the fact that when asked for an opinion by phone from members as to whether or not they supported the GGAS condor policy, very few members called) — I must admit to being tremendously torn. The death of the chick was appalling and seemed to be the result of very ignorant handling. I tend to side with GGAS, but then I talk to biologists, of whom I know a couple, who say that (National Audubon's captive breeding program) is the only feasible way to save the condors; they doubt that improvements in habitat, in this day and age, are really going to be made to the extent necessary to make the difference. With the temperature of the country indicated by a Reagan election and the appointment and confirmation of (Interior Secretary) James Watt, I must reluctantly accept that pessimistic appraisal with some credibility . . .

—GENE HULL, *El Cerrito*

Editor:

As a purist, may I mention the semantic misdemeanor perpetrated by the editors of Peterson's guides. I refer to the practice of referring to an immature bird as a "juvenal." As you know, Juvenal was a Roman satirist living during the early days of the Christian calendar. The proper designation is "juvenile" as in juvenile delinquent; an adjective, of course. I write because I have been dismayed recently to note the same mispractice perpetuated in *The Gull*.

With hopes from a semanticist.

—E. H., *no address*

The Audubon Society's Encyclopedia of North American Birds by John K. Terres (Alfred A. Knopf, 1980) has this definition: "JUVENAL. Term applied in ornithology to the plumage of a young bird that comes immediately after, or succeeding, its natal down . . . In birds which have no natal down, the term also applies to the first plumage which succeeds the naked nesting stage, characteristic of some species. The juvenal plumage is the first in the life of a bird that is composed of true contour feathers (Van Tyne and Berger, 1959).

"Some passerines and songbirds. . . wear their juvenal plumage for two or three months, but most songbirds lose it shortly after leaving the nest by molting all the body feathers into the postjuvenal (prebasic) or first-winter plumage of the so-called immature bird . . ."

Dr. Stephen F. Bailey uses the term in the Observations column either as a noun or an adjective. I have never questioned his use of the term, having been made familiar with it in both his and Joe Morlan's GGAS-sponsored birding classes.

—Editor

Editor:

. . . I usually go first to the Observations column because that lists where and what is being seen around the area. The Backyard Birders' column looks as though it will be helpful to those of us who aren't professional birders (or is that a contradiction in terms?).

. . . Don't let anything less than a ground-swell of public opinion (at least five comments or letters) sway you from including in *The Gull* articles that you feel are worthwhile and interesting. Take any comment that some article ought to be in *Audubon* as a compliment . . .

—STUART COMPTON, *San Francisco*

Editor:

Would it be possible to list a few names, addresses and phone numbers in the newsletter of more experienced birders who would be willing to answer the queries of novices regarding identification of birds found in one's backyard or fairly immediate area? . . . A break-down of members into smaller neighborhood areas for sharing rides or birding information would be most helpful . . .

—DORIS BEATTY, *Berkeley*

Any volunteers who would be willing to lend advice after a novice's endless thumbing through various bird identification books and observations have left uncertainty or who are interested in ride-sharing should call me at 527-2593 and maybe we can get something moving in this direction.

—Editor

Editor:

In response to your request for feedback regarding *The Gull*, I'd like to say that the information it provides . . . is the only reason I continue to maintain my NAS membership through GGAS. I have found it impossible to attend either meetings or field trips, much as I would love to. The meetings are out because I take Joe Morlan's Thursday night classes and the trips are out because I don't have a car.

Call Kate (Kate Partridge, carpool coordinator for the Field Trips Committee) for a ride, you say? I have called Kate, as nearly as I can remember, eight times in the last three years. Not once has she been able to help me. It tees me off (I'd put it more strongly, but I'm hoping that you will publish this) that when *you* need *my* help, as on the Oakland Christmas Count in which I've participated for the past two years, there's no trouble at all getting a ride to the site, but when I want to go on a trip for my own pleasure, suddenly there's no one there.

Don't think I'm blaming Kate — she's expressed her frustration to me over this several times. I just can't help wondering just how sincerely conservation-oriented the members are when they can't seem to grasp the importance of carpooling — or the leadership, when they appear to make no effort to plan trips (as the Sierra Club does) around available public transportation.

—CHRISTINE JONES, *San Francisco*

Joe Morlan has complained about the society's sponsoring two events on the same evening and at one point when he was on the Board of Directors he suggested that the general meeting might be changed so as not to conflict with his class. The Board felt that almost no one would

care to attend meetings on Monday night; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are all regularly-scheduled class nights; Friday night, besides being a night many people socialize, would be a difficult and expensive one on which to book meeting places. So some members are inconvenienced and that is regrettable.

Ms. Jones' letter also addresses a problem that is, as she says, one about which the Field Trips Committee is aware and, apparently, helpless. They can do no more than what they currently do and that is make carpooling available to those who care to participate one way or the other. Dan Murphy points out that people who lead field trips often lead them within a few miles of their home and therefore arrive by car with no one or with only one or two pre-chosen passengers. Some people who plan to go on a trip often arrange to take their friends and fill a car in that manner. However, there are people who, against all the logic of gas conservation and the basic niceness of sharing room in an unfilled car, still prefer to drive alone. Perhaps this letter will generate a flood of calls to Kate offering space on coming trips; shall we be unpessimistic enough to say we hope so?

Local birding trips are usually accessible by public transportation and bus lines are mentioned in The Gull. Dan points out, however, that unlike a hiking trip, birding trips must usually start when the birds are most available; i.e., during the early morning or under the best tidal conditions. Members trying to use BART on Saturdays could never get off before 9 a.m. Also, birding trips often move from place to place within a large location, requiring cars for caravanning. —Editor

Editor:

. . . I would find it most helpful if The Gull could carry a projected calendar of at least three months outlining approximate dates for the best times to bird certain spots . . .

—GERALDINE MURPHY, San Francisco

Between our regularly planned field trips and the GGAS-published 1981 Birders' Calendar and Almanac (available through the GGAS office for \$5, postpaid, including tax), additional listing would be a duplication. The calendar suggests "hot spots" for birding each month and also contains a bar graph which indicates the best times of the year to see various bird species. Reviewing past issues of The Gull for observations of rare birds is also a way to plan weekend outings. We keep a file of Gulls at the GGAS office; also check your local library to see if they have a back file. —Editor

Editor's note: This issue I've devoted much more space to letters than will be the future norm and this is just a sample of the last two months mail. Those letters I have not printed I've tried to answer personally. My conclusion from the correspondence is just what I suspected; namely, you can't please all the people even part of the time. Some readers absolutely dote on certain columns while other find them, as one reader called it, "off-putting." Without exception, however, our members are people of great compassion. Each one prefaced or ended their letter with thanks for the time Fanya Carter and I put in preparing this newsletter. Thank you! Please keep writing.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Betty Davis, a Research Fellow of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, died in mid-January. She was a staunch defender of the California Sea Otter and the California Condor, to cite only two species which benefitted from her excellent writings and activism on their behalf. Memorial gifts may be sent to *Friends of the Sea Otter*, Box 221220, Carmel, CA 93922.

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

***The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month.**